

## Failure In Victory

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Summary: Very long- don't start it with just 5 minutes. It's an original piece. Or, at least, I've never seen anything like it.

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DISCLAIMER: I HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH K.A. APPLGATE, SCHOLASTIC, TOM CLANCY, OR WHATEVER PUBLISHER HE WORKS WITH. THIS WAS MADE ENTIRELY BY SOFOR~ AND MYSELF, WITH NO OFFICIAL HELP. I DO NOT OWN ANY OF THE CHARACTERS, EXCEPT FOR SEAN AND RAPTRE. THE OTHERS BELONG TO EITHER K.A. APPLGATE OR TOM CLANCY.

Author's Note: Sometimes this is first person, sometimes third. Sean is\_ not\_ the only person who narrates. It'll be explained in the Epilogue. Also, it is recommended that you have read the Animorphs series. Spoiler alert: Up to #13, I think, and MM4. Also, I \_did\_ get the name (but not the theory, which was my own work- and based on nothing but my own ideas, no physics, etc., involved) for quantum slipstream from \_Star Trek: Voyager\_. Got a problem with that? And I know Jack Ryan will not be President in 2001, isn't running for it, and doesn't exist. So what? He's cool. Big deal if he doesn't exist. One last thing: I know RYA is the name of a club. I'm a division leader in it. Hope they don't mindâ€¦|

## Introduction

My name is Sean. No last name. Actually, it doesn't matter. Not anymore. But I won't tell you it. But what does a name tell you? There are lots of Seans. Or there used to be.

A first name tells you nothing. There's a Sean that used to be in my class. He was a nice kind of guy. Then, there's a Sean from a book, by Tom Clancy, that is one of the nastiest people ever, real or

imagined. I hope I'm closer the former.

Anyway, I'm not who you think. I'm not even totally human.

I used to be. But not anymore. Now I'm a freak. Not even a freak of nature. I'm a freak of technology.

Anyway, you're probably bored now. If you want, I could go on some moreâ€¦ No? I thought so.

Chapter I Part 1

SEAN

\*\*\_

Bring!!!!!!!

\_\*\*

"Who wants to share their report on the downfall of communism?"

Another school day. Another six and a half-hours of boredom, then thirty minutes on the bus. Then, I had homework, then my brother's stupid Cub Scouts meeting, and then dinner. Then I had only an hour and a half of free time.

I hate Wednesdays.

After Social Studies, I had English. Then Accelerated Math, then lunch, then Spanish. After that were Accelerated Science, Gym, and then Study Hall. At least I could do some homework there.

You're probably wondering why I tell you about my schedule. I don't know why. Not really. Besides, it didn't finish. Not that day. Not ever.

SEAN

Middle of Math. I was listening to the teacher drone on about what I had learned three years ago, which had been, in turn, learned a year before that. And this was "Accelerated"!

I started daydreaming. It's not like I'd miss anything.

A U-Haul van pulled up in our parking lot. That was weird.

What came out was even weirder. Big crates. They could easily fit four people in each one. They loaded all twelve of them onto wheeled crates. One went into each wing, on each floor.

I looked back at the teacher. Now it was stuff from third grade. By the way, I'm in eighth grade.

It took a minute for anything to happen. Then: "Shiva!" it was from the PA. "Shiva! Code Shiva!"

The teacher immediately stopped talking. She looked out the window, then decided it was safe. Since we were on the first floor, she made

us go out the emergency exit windows. Once out, she had us dash to the nearby little stretch of forest.

Eight of the people in our class made an obvious resistance. One of them managed to run away to a tree. She reached inside-

And pulled out some kind of gun! She immediately shot Mrs. Parkinson, who disappeared.

It wasn't a bullet that came out.

Ariel had a ray gun.

SEAN

She tossed one to each of the other seven rebellious students. Then, she took some rope out of the tree. She tied each of us up, each of us back to back. I was with some kid named Jake.

He whispered something in my ear. "I'm about to do something weird. Don't freak out."

I nodded, just a little bit. But nothing happened.

"Forget that."

I thought about how horrible this was. Where they some kind of terrorists? Where were the police? Where was the FBI?

[Note- Rainbow is an anti-terrorism organization. Clark's in charge, Stanley's second in command, and Covington and Chavez are the team leaders. Anyone else is a team member.]

## Chapter II

"Rainbow, Rainbow, are you there? This is the President."

"Yes?"

"Get Clark, Stanley, Covington, and Chavez on the phone. On the double!"

"Getting them now."

"Clark here. What's up, Jack?"

"There's a terrorist incident. A school in \_\_\_\_\_. " {Sorry, can't tell you where.}

"We'll be there right away!"

Twenty minutes later, both teams were on their way to America on the Concord. Then, there was another hop on a 747. It took four hours total to get to the school.

They were too late.

## Chapter III

SEAN

It took an hour, by my watch, before anything happened. Ariel, who looked like the leader, led us to a huge tree. It slid out of place, like it was some kind of machine. There was a huge staircase.

Jake suddenly jumped at Ariel. She was knocked down the staircase. But he kept on rolling. And I was tied to him.

It was not a happy time.

SEAN

A huge monster picked us up. It had huge hawk feet, a snake neck, and a bird beak. It was also covered with blades. Its right elbow blade hit my left shoulder. It was bleeding insanely. I passed out.

Just slice off his arm, the Visser said in disgust. A Hork-Bajir complied.

Jake was taken to the pier. He tried to resist, but his all of his attempts were futile. In five minutes, he was a Controller. He was the enemy.

JAKE

The Hork-Bajir shoved my head down into the pool. I tried to morph, but I still couldn't. Why couldn't I morph? Something was seriously wrong.

The Yeerk slug urged its way into my head. There was incredible pain, then numbness. Same as what happened a year ago.

—

No!!!

—

I felt the slug take control of my body. First the legs, then my head. Then came my arms and the rest of my body.

The Yeerk was looking at my memories now. He had no right to those!

The Yeerk saw all my memories. He was uninterested, up until last year.

He knew. He knew.

"Clear!" Covington shouted on the radio.

"Clear!" Pierce reported.

"Clear!" Chavez agreed.

"The whole place is clear. We didn't find anyone. No subjects, not hostages, no nothing. Neither did the HRT, or Delta Force, or even the local cops." Clark complained.

"Yeah- but is that good or bad?" Covington.

"I don't know. I just don't know."

What?! What do you mean, this human is an Andalite bandit!

"Jake" explained.

Get out of that body! Stick this host in a cage, guards.

"Where's Jake?"

He called the meeting himself.

"Jake would come. This isn't like him."

"Maybe he couldn't come."

"We'll wait."

#### Chapter IV

SEAN

I woke up on a table. It was cold- stainless steel. It reminded me of something- oh. That movie. I couldn't remember what it was called. There were- I don't know what to call them, cuffs?- on both my ankles, knees, and my right elbow and wrist. There were more at my waist, neck, and forehead. Why weren't there any on my left arm?

I looked over as much as my restraints allowed. Oh. I didn't have a left arm. Somehow, it wasn't a surprise. Instead of my arm, there was nothing. It was smooth, like it had never been there. I could see it because I had no clothes on. No surprise there either.

I just laid there for a long time. I couldn't tell how long, because my watch was gone.

Guess what? No surprise.

Anyway, I finally noticed a difference. My right arm was disappearing. So were my legs. It took a while, but I noticed it. Some internal organs were shifting. Eventually my skin became black, hard, and scaly. Once all my limbs were gone, they started growing back. But they were different. My legs were shorter, scaly and had talons at the end.

Guess what? No surprise.

My arms became bat wings. They had a sort of "hand" at the end of them.

Again, no surprise.

My neck became longer, like the neck of those monsters. My head became more like a snake's than anything else. I had the gaping jaws of an anaconda, and the fangs of a cobra. My eyes were suddenly much sharper, like a hawk's. My ears flattened out, but became shaped like a cat's.

How did I know all this? A mirror had suddenly appeared on the low ceiling.

I'm not even going to say whether it was a surprise or not.

One more detail- my wings had blades on their front. Surprise? I'm not going to answer.

I laid there. It was exactly fifty-three minutes and seventeen-point-five seconds before anything happened (since I saw the blades). I now had a clock in my head. Surprise? Nah.

When something did happen, it was a huge relief. The shackles- I knew what to call them by then- slid into the table. I sat up-

And was zapped by a huge electric shock.

I don't think so, little \_Veleek\_. You're mine now. The Andalite is getting too old, and this human is much too young. So now you're \_mine\_, \_Veleek\_.

Jake walked into the room, surrounded by two monsters. Jake walked up right to the edge of the force field. It shut down for a second- I could tell by the lack of static electricity jumping onto me- and Jake put his head close to mine. I whacked him with my wing. I lost control of myself.

Jake fell to the floor, bleeding. My right wing blade slice a monster in half. The other one charged straight into me. Without realizing it, I kicked him back with my huge talon. He slammed into the wall and fell.

Jake grabbed a ray gun from a fallen monster. He fired, with bad aim. It was a wide miss. I knocked the gun out of his hand, or tried to. Jake jerked, and his whole arm and shoulder came off. He fell down.

A slug crawled out of his ear. I crushed it with my foot.

I had no idea that I had just signed the death warrant for the human race.

Jake, are you okay? Stupid question. Of course he wasn't!

"N-no. Bu-but better dead, better dead than a slave."

With that, leader of the only hope for our planet, died.

SEAN

I figured that there was nothing I could do for Jake. Maybe I could give the body to his family- no! Of course I couldn't! How would I ever go into public like this?

There were only two exits. I chose the one other than the one Jake had walked in.

It led me to an empty carwash. I tested my wings, and flew.

My wings couldn't hold Jake's body and me together. I put Jake's body

next to a tree, and put a few wildflowers on his body. It was the best I could do.

I flew off.

## Chapter V Part 2

"Visser Three is dead?!"

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you. You are excused."

The Emperor turned on his holopad. He dialed in the combo for Visser 4.

"May the Kandrona shine and strengthen you, Council Member."

"May the Kandrona shine and strengthen you, Visser 4."

"The incompetent Visser 3 is dead. You are now Visser 3. Temporarily, all of his troops and supplies are yours. You are now in charge of Earth."

"The Andalite bandits have thrown us a direct insult. You are authorized for an all-out invasion."

"Yes sir!"

Rachel was pacing. Marco was collapsed in a haystack. Cassie was alternating between doing chores, pacing, and sitting in a corner. Tobias was up in the rafters, and Ax was watching TV on a portable set.

"Why isn't he here?"

I know you don't want to hear this- I don't- but the probability Prince Jake is infested, or dead, is very high.

"I'm disgusted with you all. Of course he's all right!"

Ax suddenly sat straight up. He turned the volume up, and adjusted it so everyone could see the screen.

"Channel Five Special Report: A young boy's body has been found in the woods. If you know who it is, please call the police immediately." The picture was of a bloody boy with his right arm gone.

It was Jake.

Cassie started sobbing. Silent tears came from Marco's eyes. Tobias flew. Ax started to do some kind of Andalite ritual for a fallen Prince. Rachel ran into Cassie's house to call the police. She almost lifted the phone, then realized something.

The Sharing logo had been at the bottom of the TV screen. The Yeerks must have had him.

She warned the others.

Marco started running. How did they get Jake?

Marco couldn't go anywhere. Not in civilization. The Yeerks were everywhere.

Where could he go?

The forest. He could get a morph in it, hide. He jogged towards it.

He would have sprinted if he knew there were Hork-Bajir chasing him.

Katy Smyth was camping. Since she was only five, she loved it. She thought camping with her dad for a week was the best thing in her life.

Her ideas would change soon.

Marco saw the Horks. What could he do? There was no time to do anything!

Then he noticed the tent. If he dashed in thereâ€¦

He did it. There was a sleeping man and what was probably his sleeping daughter. Marco acquired the girl. He glanced out the tent door- the Horks were getting closer! He stripped off his clothes and morphed the girl. Good thing they had sheets and not sleeping bags.

Marco shoved his clothes under the sheets. Then he crawled in. Maybe they'd leave him alone. Maybeâ€¦

The Horks sliced open the tent. They looked around, and saw the two human children that were either twins, or-

The Hork commander grabbed Katy. He told another to grab Marco.

After an hour and a half, Marco was getting really worried. What if he couldn't escape?

After two and a half-hours, they decided that Katy was the human bandit. She acted so much more like it. The commanding Hork sliced her head off. They dropped Marco down.

Marco would forever be Katy Smith, with "amnesia."

## Chapter VI

Cassie, Ax, Tobias, and Rachel were planning. They didn't know what had happened to Marco. But they were too angry about what happened to Jake to care. They were assaulting the Yeerk Pool.

They would go in through the McDonald's entrance. Each had a Controller morph. Tobias had Chapman, and Rachel had somehow gotten Chapman's wife. Cassie and Ax had two people seen at a full member meeting of The Sharing. Nobody objected to morphing them. Not even Cassie.



They would go in that night.

Everyone was in his or her Controller form. Each of them ordered a "Happy Meal with extra happy." They went down into the Yeerk Pool.

Once they were in there, they demorphed and remorphed to their battle morphs.

There was a fierce battle. But the Yeerks had won. They had Cassie and Ax cornered.

Tobias and Rachel tried to get there. But a Dracon beam disintegrated Cassie. Then Ax was disintegrated.

Tobias and Rachel made it out. They went to the airport, and snuck on a flight- the first flight they saw. It ended up to be the US AIR flight to LA.

The next day, the real attack began. First, the Yeerks staged an attack on the ozone layer. Thousands died. Then came bomber assaults all over the planet.

The Controllers on the planet were being evacuated. All the Controllers, and as many possible hosts as they could grab were shuttled off to Earth's moon.

What was left of the world armies, navies, air forces, and all the other military groups were mobilized. But the total human military only shot down a few fighters. They captured one, an ancient Bug fighter. The only discoveries were of the Dracon cannons, which were being fitted onto every fighter plane, tank, and just about everything else. That definitely helped human chances. But not that much.

Every continent but North America was devastated. Millions were mutated by the radiation from the ozone layer holes. There were less than a thousand pure humans left.

Rachel had been mutated by the radiation. So had Tobias. Both had gone to LA after it had been barraged, figuring that it wouldn't be attacked again. They went together, as flies.

When they fled to the deep seas, they became the same thing. They were sharkish creatures with long tails. They ate large fish. They met up with two other pairs of creatures like them and formed a pack.

## Chapter VII

Clark had hoped right from the start that Rainbow would never die. But now it seemed that it would, and it wasn't even going out in a fiery blaze like it should.

Rainbow had been decimated. There were only five people who had stayed with it. There was Clark, Stanley, Covington, Chavez, and Noonan. Everyone else had either died or had left.

"Well, it looks like Rainbow is gone," Clark sighed.

"It did good well it lasted, though," said Chavez.

They were all together in an office that had ended up in the middle of the road when the Yeerks had attacked. Their families were in a nearby apartment building.

Not for long.

The Yeerk Beetle bomber swooped over the city. There was an abandoned apartment building, near an office that somehow ended up in the middle of the street. There was a life signal coming from each one. They were probably just rats, but the bomber had its orders.

It dropped a proton bomb- an ellipsoidal hunk of nartrine, an element that was basically non-radioactive metalized Francium bombarded with neutrinos. The nartrine contained an unnamed element with 203 protons- and no electrons.

It exploded spectacularly, killing everyone in the apartment building and in the office. Or so the pilot thought.

The Andalites had a brand new weapon. It was also a form of faster transportation. It was called quantum slipstream. According to slipstream theory, our form of space was positive, and Z-space was negative. So there had to be a neutral, right? That was slipstream. It, essentially, was nothing and everything at the same time. All you had to do was engage a half-hearted burn, and you were traveling at nearly a light year a minute. It was useful, also, in that it nearly cancelled out relativity. But in order to sustain such speeds, one needed special shielding.

They had also discovered substream, which wasn't quite as fast as slipstream, but less dangerous. They had the ability to destroy substream, and everything in it, at will. So there were two separate battle plans.

The Andalites knew that the Yeerks were centering all of their military forces on Earth. So they could force the Yeerks into either slipstream or substream, and destroy them. The Andalites chose substream.

SEAN

I had hidden in a small forest. It had been untouched by the Yeerk attack, except for the ozone layer holes. I was lucky to find one.

Nobody knew about me. Not yet, anyway. That probably would change soon. I couldn't prevent that for long. I could try, though.

But did I want to? The solitude was slowly driving me crazy.

I decided to sleep on it.

MARCO

Another morning, another horrible day of confinement and crowding. Another day of begging for scraps like a dog. Another day of pretending to be a five-year-old girl I was not. Why did I morph her?

Why didn't I resist? Why? Why? \_Why?\_

I was going insane.

From the looks of the people around me, I wasn't the only one.

The Yeerks had put us in a huge room that was probably a ship all by itself. Then, every once in a while, they would come and take some people. I had been here for at least two weeks, and they had come about eight times.

My "father" had been taken. So had dozens of others. What would they do with me when they found out who I really was? What would happen to me?

My five-year-old body was constantly hungry, and the horrible food they gave us didn't help. They put it on a table that was a foot above my reach, so to get any at all I had to beg. Most of the time, I couldn't get any. The people who could reach were too busy stuffing their own faces with stale crackers, fruit that was anything but ripe, and horrible water. When I did get any food, it was the worst of it. I got the broken crackers, the dead fruit, and the water that people had already drank- and spit out. And that was only about once every other day.

I would have hanged myself with my shoelace, but the Yeerks had made us strip down to no clothes.

SEAN

```
<="" blades="" but="" could="" device="" else="" had="" head,="" i=""  
in="" it="" least="" my="" on="" p="" prevented="" room.=""  
sheathed,="" shoes.="" shoved="" slugs="" slugs.="" small="" talk,=""  
talons="" that="" that.="" the="" tied="" tiny="" to="" tried=""  
up="" was="" were="" which="" who="" wing="">
```

It was 5:32:26 when I woke up. It was another 15 minutes and 17 seconds before anything happened. I was forced to stand up by one of those monster freakazoids. The made me walk down a corridor to another stainless steel table. It was exactly the size of my body, but instead of a place for my head, there was a small pool that was filled with something that was anything but spring water.

They made me lay down on it. Not surprisingly, shackles appeared over my knees, ankles, wrists, the middle of my wings, my neck, and my forehead. The monsters made me tilt my head to the side. It hurt! Several of my scales fell off.

Something was touching my ear! It tried to lift my head up, but I couldn't. It was a slug!

The thing was coming into my ear!

The pain was overtaking at first, but then it was just numb. Then the- the \_thing\_ was in my head. It took a minute, then the monsters- Hork-Bajir- removed the device from my head.

How did I know that?!

I tried to scream, to do anything. But I couldn't. Then I calmly

said, I have control. The shackles disappeared.

I didn't want to say that! What was going on?

My body sat up, then stood. My wing blades were unsheathed, and the shoes were taken off my talons. It walked out the door into the huge cavern I had fallen into- was it two weeks ago? That long?

—

Fool. You can't control yourself anymore. Stop trying.

—

What? Where did that come from?

—

Your master, stupid! I control you now, down to the very last drop. I am a Yeerk. The most powerful one.

Well, get out of my head.

Of course I won't! Now shut up. I need to learn about my new body.

—

The Yeerk flexed my wings, and tested them. Then he started flapping.

He would never get off the ground that way! If he-

The Yeerk bent my legs back, leaped, and flew.

Darn.

Chavez pushed himself out of the rubble. Everyone in the apartment building had to be dead. Had to be. The building was gone. Everyone in the office was dead except him. He had checked.

It was night. He must have blacked out for a few hours.

Chavez limped away, towards the nearest place he knew there were people in.

Good thing he didn't stay longer. The remnants of the nartrine bomb touched a small water droplet, and destroyed what was left of the office.

Marco was in a corner, curled up into a ball. He was trying to get to sleep. It was cold on this ship when the Earth passed between it and the sun. The Yeerks apparently didn't care much about their future hosts' comfort.

Marco managed to fall asleep. Just a light, dreamless sleep. In his sleep, he uncurled and rolled around. He rolled, slowly, into a Hork-Bajir guard. Luckily, he didn't hit the blade. The Hork kicked him. Then he woke up.

When the Hork had kicked him, the talon had carved a huge cut down Marco's back.

The Hork had the good sense not to waste a potential good host's life. He called over a human guard. She picked him up and brought him to the tiny medical clinic on the ship. After being healed, they had him infested.

The last free human Animorph was now a Controller.

### Chapter IIX Part 3

Estrein Six-Four-Seven thought that they had discovered him. Why else would they call him to the infestation pier in the middle of the night?

He went slowly, cautiously. He didn't want to offend any of the high-ranking Yeerks in the pool. There were two Sub Vissers, and even Visser 54 in it!

When Estrein reached the pier, he sensed the ear splash down right on top of him. A human, a young one. It made sense. Why would they waste a better host, or use one that could put up a better fight?

Estrein slowly went into it. He hated this part. That was why he joined the RYA, the Rebel Yeerks Alliance. It was a newer YPM, after the original was crushed.

When he had full control, he turned its head around. The Hork-Bajir weren't killing him, not even restraining him! He hadn't been caught!

Once he decided that it was totally safe, he explored the body. He tried to shun the memories as much as possible. Why should he intrude on someone else's business?

It was a young human, about five human years old. A female. Clumsy, but agile at the same time.

Estrein started to walk. He was headed for the job list. Then he realized: the human had no clothes. Estrein hurried to the clothes room and found clothes that both fit and looked presentable.

Estrein found that his job was, for now, to be infestation manager for one of the new, miniature Pool ships. He grimaced. He had hoped that he would never have to do this.

MARCO

The Yeerk seemed awfully quiet and unobtrusive.

—

That's because I'm from the RYA.

What's that?

—

\_Rebel Yeerks Alliance.\_ So maybe he wasn't so bad after

all.

—

\_How come you know so much about us?\_ Then, I felt my memory cells being probed.

—

No way. This is impossible.

Anything is possible.

I supposeâ€¦|

—

"I" walked on in silence. Then, finally, I asked: \_You won't report me, will you?\_

—

Of course not!

Good.

—

Maybe this would be okay.

SEAN

This was horrible.

After flying, the Yeerk went onto a new ship that was a sort of small, portable Yeerk Pool. He was touring the ships. It took three weeks before anything interesting happened. Between those two points was a time when the only time I had control over myself was the half hour spent in a high security cell with three Horks guarding me, while the \$@\*?! Yeerk enjoyed himself in the Pool.

—

I hate my life.

Good. You should.

—

MARCO

Every three days, I was in a cage a dozen or so of other people who begged, screamed, and cried. I managed to cry every time, and throw a fit about every other time I was out. I didn't want to seem like I was anything but a young, new host with a cruel master.

Every day, I was forced to watch Earth bombarded with heavy Dracon beams. Estrein hated it as much as me, but all the other Yeerks loved it. I had to watch, so I wouldn't be caught.

One day, when South America was being destroyed, someone new came on board. It wasn't human, Yeerk, Taxxon or even a Garatron. It was something totally new. Estrein was as much in the dark about it as I was.

The host was, essentially, a human. Except, instead of arms, there were bat wings. With blades on the front. Feet were talons. Snake neck. Snake head, with an anaconda's jaws, and, most likely, a cobra's fangs. The eyes looked good, and the ears were a cat's. And one more thing. It had black scales instead of skin.

That was one weird creature.

Estrein's captain seemed to lose control of himself. His mouth fell open, and he pointed. Then he started laughing.

I suppose, in a demented way, the creature did look a little funny. But not to a fighter. To a fighter, it was danger everywhere. Anyway, what it did next was not funny.

The thing's right wing flashed. The captain's head rolled to the floor.

Jake's brother was dead.

SEAN

I was shocked at what the Yeerk Emperor had just done. Sure, I didn't like him laughing at me either, but to kill him—

—

Shut up, fool.

—

I went into a corner of my mind, doing what I had been doing for the past three weeks. Pretending that I was just a normal kid, that the terrorist incident had never happened. Right now, I would be asleep.

Then, I was. The Yeerk had forced me to go to sleep. He did that sometimes.

Estrein gaped. What had just gone on?

Stop staring at me! Do your job!

Estrein just stared. Marco was yelling mentally at him, tell him to turn around. But he didn't.

In a flash, the Yeerk was all over Marco and Estrein. Wing blades going, talons flashing. He didn't want to kill them, though. They needed to be taught a lesson.

SEAN

I woke up. I was in my "normal" body, the one I had been in for the past month or so. But I wasn't flying, I wasn't on the ground, and I wasn't in water. I was levitating in whiteness.

It was a few seconds before anything happened. Then, off in the distance, I heard shouting. Two people were arguing. Then another one joined in. Suddenly, I knew who it was, even though I couldn't possibly know. They were all weird names. Ellimist, Drode, and Crayak.

In about twenty seconds, I could make out what they were saying. The first voice I understood was the Ellimist's.

HE'S FREE TO HIS OWN CHOICE!

"Of course he isn't! The Yeerks created him, and the Yeerks are ours! You know that!"

\*\*

IDIOT! GO AWAY, DRODE! BUT HE IS OURS, ANYWAY.

\*\*

NO HE ISN'T! HE IS 50% AN ANDALITE CREATION! IT IS HIS \_OWN\_ CHOICE, AND NO ONE ELSE'S!

Soon I could tell they were fighting over me. And, a little after that, I could see them. The Ellimist was a blue glowing- I don't know how to describe it. But Crayak was a like a huge red spider with one stalk and a big, red eye on it. There were a few mechanical parts visible on him.

The fight went on. Eventually, the Ellimist won out.

WHICH DO YOU WANT, SEAN?

I- I don't know what you're talking about.

WHICH ONE DO YOU WANT? NUMBER 1, 2, OR 3?

Uhâ€| number 2.

Suddenly, I was sucked into- into nothing. A huge, blue swirling helix appeared in front of me. I flapped my wings, and was in it.

The universe seemed to be falling apart! It was actually collapsing into itself. And I was in the center!

Gravity went insane! I was being condensed into a small ball! Bones I didn't know I had were breaking! But, somehow, it didn't hurt.

Suddenly, I was back in the real world. I felt pretty sure that the Yeerk wasn't monitoring my dream.

But he was still there. He was very much there.

A Yeerk with a little girl for a host was now thrown in a corner. She was all bloody. Nobody was helping her. They were too absorbed in watching the screen.



And now for the grand finale. The Yeerk said. A huge ship, shaped like an elongated torpedo was glowing. A ball appeared at the very tip of it.

It fired! A huge laser beam shot out at Earth. It wasn't a true laser, because when it hit Earth, it spread out and bounced along the surface. It was too bright to look for a moment.

When I looked back, the American, European, and Asian continents were completely gone. One, shorter burst, and Antarctica, Africa, and Australia were also.

Earth was, essentially, destroyed.

## Chapter IX

MARCO

I heard the gasps of amazement. When Estrein turned my eyes, we could see all the land on Earth totally and completely destroyed.

Everyone I knew was dead.

After a minute, a janitor came along to get me to the med clinic. They put me on a stretcher with, for some reason, shackles. It made my broken bones and torn skin hurt a lot more.

Estrein was taken out of my head and into a small bucket. The Controller hurried him off to the pool, while I had to wait on the stretcher. This time, the tears weren't forced.

Tobias and Rachel were luckily unhurt. They hadn't been close to land, or the surface.

But millions of people, and trillions of other life forms, weren't so lucky. They were vaporized in an instant- or worse. Sea creatures that ate near the surface were denied food. Birds that weren't killed either suffocated or were eaten by starving surface fish.

But some were doing greardereep-sea fish had great carrion. And a few lucky ones, with a strong dose of DS809, adapted instantly to the radiation. In fact, a few became creatures that used the radiation for power. Thanks to them, the Earth would replenish itself in a few thousand years.

Gisrov-Illyrich-Yarsom was in charge of the operation. He was captain of the Strafe, the ship that would mainly induce the temporal substream field upon the Yeerks. Millions of innocents would be killed, but that was not the point. The point was that the Andalites would win the war.

But he didn't like that idea. Why should he kill millions, for virtually nothing? Just a little pride, and not much else.

That was high treason, but Gisrov didn't care. He made his choice. When it was time to induce the field, he would not. Instead, he would fly away, in his Model 68 fighter. He would fly to some uncharted system and live there. Maybe in Ross 128.

MARCO

I was shoved into a pathetic little ER. They had good medicine, but it hurt!

For the huge scrape along my back, they poured this thing onto it that really stung. For the broken bones, they used this little shot thingy that hurt even more. They just sort of went back together. Then they gave me another shot, in three places. Both arms, and my forehead. Then the doctor left, leaving me on the table.

My skin grew black and scaly, I grew bat wings, and talons. Basically, I was the creature that had hurt me so much, for no good reason. Then, the final change. I got a clock in my head, like an Andalite.

It took seven minutes, thirty-eight second before anyone came in. I still had the shackles- they hurt a lot.

This time, I got a different Yeerk. But, again, it was from the RYA.

But it was a lot more important. He was the Vice President of RYA, and a Council Member.

It looked like I was in good hands-well, not hands. But good ones nonetheless.

Jack Ryan hated this. He was President of the %&@#!?~^ US! Why should he have to put up with this?

He was on a mini Pool ship. He was treated barely any better than the others. He, at least, could keep his clothes and belongings. But the Smith & Wesson semi-automatic and his hunting rifle were thoughtfully removed from that list. His family and friends were either dead or Controllers.

He, luckily, was neither. But he wasn't much better off. He had a brain that was somehow resistant to Yeerk infestation. Thanks to that, he was scheduled for execution that afternoon. And there was nothing his Secret Service could do about it. Ironically, his executioner was his most loyal Secret Service agent.

He didn't know how they were going to do it. Which was just as well, because the method was nasty. They were going to put him, alive and slowly, into the main fusion engine.

But that would never happen.

The time had come.

Gisrov knew that, but wasn't on the bridge. He was heading for the fighter bay. His fighter was separate from the rest. The smooth elongated fighter looked like a torpedo with an Andalite tail. It also had the new Kafit missiles, both pods on either side of the nose. Gisrov went in and launched. The mag shield was already down.

Gisrov engaged his slipstream drive. The Model 68 was one of the only fighters with slipstream shielding.

Apparently, it wasn't good enough.

Tobias pushed ahead. His electric charge reading was going insane. What could be ahead?

A pod. It was a space podâ€¦

He recognized it from something in the back of his mind. It was from something or otherâ€¦

Whatever it was, it was giving off big electric charges. There was something alive in itâ€¦

He nudged a small panel with his nose. It slid open. The space was barely big enough for him. He swam in.

The door closed! The water was draining!

Stupid, stupid, stupid. It was an air lock, and now he was going to suffocate! There was no saltwater!

Tobias tried something. He was a \_nothlit\_, but maybe the radiation reactivated the morphing powerâ€¦

His tail was shriveling up! He was morphing!

But he wasn't becoming his human self. Or hawk.

What was going on?

Tobias was becoming someone else. A human, but still someone else.

Whoever it was, it was a kid. Tobias's normal age. It was-

Jake?

Suddenly, Tobias was his human self. \_That was weirdâ€¦\_

--

The water was fully gone, and Tobias was himself. The other door opened. Tobias walked in.

Inside was what looked like a lab. There were microscopes, long tables, etc.

But there was something else. On the far end, there was a cage. A row of cages, actually. But only one was occupied.

On his way to it, Tobias saw what had made his electric charge sense go crazy. There was a force field generator!

Once up to the bars, Tobias saw a very strange creature. Imagine one of those gargoyles from that stupid Fox show. Then make the head a Hork-Bajir's, give it black scales, and big talons. Then add wing blades.

This wasn't Marco or Sean. This was someone else.

But it wasn't a natural race.

#### Chapter X Part 4

Raptre saw something. It had two legs, two arms, and one head. It had no fur, just on the head. A kind of dark yellow. Some kind of artificial skin over the natural, pink-tan color.

That was a weird creature.

Who are you? Raptre asked.

"My name's Tobias," he said. \_Thought-speak? That's weirdâ€|\_

--

I'm Raptre.

"Why are you in that cage?"

The Scientist put me here. He has four legs, and an upper body like yours, except the fur is blue and he's got no mouth. He has eyes on top of his head, too.

"An Andaliteâ€|"

What's that?

"What you just described. Come on, I'll get you out of that cage."

Okay.

Tobias looked around for a key. He didn't find any, so he tried something else. He put one hand sturdily on the bar, the other next to it. He propped himself up with his foot, and-

The whole thing came toppling down on him!

—

\_Why would anyone make such a weak cage?\_ "Come on. Can you breathe underwater?"

Yeah.

" Come on then."

Wait a sec. I gotta go get something. Tobias waited a "sec", then another, then anotherâ€| Raptre finally came. He was carrying a tiny device with one big button on it.

"What's that?"

I dunno. I found it a while ago.

"You ever push the button?"

Heck no!

"Whatever. Follow me."

Tobias walked to the airlock. He pressed the panel, and the first door slid open. The door closed, and it started filling up with water. Tobias slowly changed to adapt to the saltwater. He became the shark that he was before. Raptre did too.

When the water level was full, they swam out. They swam for a while, to the pack territory.

When a gargerfish swam by, it amazed Raptre. Tobias saw them all the time, though. They would have made a great meal, and was big enough for the whole pack, but they used to people. Tobias and his pack refused to eat anything that used to be a human.

A big fish swam by. This one was natural- a whale shark. That amazed Raptre so much, he dropped the remote.

He swooped down to get it, but his nose accidentally hit the button. It didn't seem to do anything, so Raptre got it back into that little space behind his dorsal fin where it would stay. Tobias tagged the fish with a special kind of sonar that his pack, and his pack only, could sense. They would have a good meal for the next two weeks.

Tobias tagged the fish again, and followed it.

We're picking up a distress signal from, uhâ€| 4297 by 67240 by 36084, Captain.

Can you identify the sender?

Negative, Captain, no voice, visual or fingerprint ID.

Send down a recovery pod.

Yes sir!

Frils-Tyl-Marthul walked down the corridor. Frils was the best fighter pilot the Andalite military could get. Now he was going on such an easy mission. It was a disgrace!

The Bug fighter readied its weapons. The fighter was due to come out any second nowâ€|

Frils's fighter, a Model 70, was the best out. It was also the newest. Officially, it wasn't even a prototype. But it was no match for a swarm of Karsna missiles. And there were two aimed right at him, locked and loaded. All he needed to do to was engage even an eighth burn, and he was dead. And he did exactly that.

The best Andalite pilot, was dead.

## Chapter XI

An hour before, Gisrov's slipstream drives had activated the Yeerk sentry net's sensors. A few fighters were deployed immediately to its destination. Each had a Karsna swarm missile launcher.

It took an hour for the Yeerks, and just over that for Gisrov. When he arrived, he was met with fiery oblivion. He had just a second to realize what had happ-

I had that dream again. It started out the same as the one where I had to choose between the doors, but ended differently.

WHICH DO YOU CHOOSE, SEAN?

I still don't know what you're talking about.

YES OR NO?

What are you talking about?

YES OR NO? \_CHOOSE\_!

What's the question?

—

CHOOSE!!!!

—

Uh- no.

CHOOSE A NUMBER, 1 OR 3.

Um- 1.

VERY WELL.

The world faded.

I woke back up. I was in my high security cell, while the Yeerk enjoyed himself in the pool.

I looked out. Why was it so quiet?

Nobody was moving! Everything was frozen!

IT WAS I, SEAN.

Eliminist?

YES.

Suddenly, three people appeared in the pool. There were three kids, my age. Another one appeared- he looked like a shorter Jake. I knew a few two of them- Marco and Rachel.

"Who are you?" Right after I said that, I realized that it was a stupid question. They were frozen, too. Then, an instant later, I realized that the words had actually come out of my mouth, not my head! I was human again!

Then I saw them move. They weren't frozen.

"I think I know you- you're Sean, aren't you?" That was Marco. An instant later, he looked down, then up. Surprise showed on his face.

"Yeah- you're Marco, and that's Rachel. I think you're- is it Tom, or something like that?"

"Tobias."

"I'm EreK."

"Um, one question- could you get me out of here?"

EreK walked over, and with one simple pull, demolished the wall of the cage.

"Wow!"

"I'm not human."

"Oh. Nobody is."

We walked around for a while. "Why did the Ellimist do this?"

"He's got a new part to his name now. Now he's our \_spontaneous\_ intergalactic pain in the butt."

I HAD A REASON. THERE'S SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.

The Yeerk Pool disappeared. We were floating in whiteness.

I was my "normal" body. Not the human one. Marco was something that looked just like me. Tobias was a shark, the same kind as Rachel. EreK was himself.

THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE NOW. Then, suddenly, I was my human self. So were the others, except EreK was a metallic, two-legged wolf. THIS IS WHAT YOU SHOULD BE.

THE STRANDS OF SPACE-TIME HAVE BEEN ALTERED.

"So you're giving us a chance to put them right?"

NO. I AM TELLING YOU THAT SOON-

Everything had disappeared. There was nothing.

Chapter XII Part 5

Raptre whirled around. Where was Tobias? He had been there a second ago!

Where could he be? Raptre couldn't feel anything, couldn't sense anything other than a few small fish and the whale shark from the electric charge sense that that activated underwater.

Raptre was getting angry. What was going on?

Why had Tobias left him?

Drode smiled. Everything was going perfectly. The Andalites had done their experimenting, thanks to him, and the Yeerks had, in turn, stolen the technology. The Yeerk Emperor and another Council Member had gotten hosts that they wouldn't have. Drode had no idea that the other Council Member was from the RYA.

Drode felt something coming from Earth. Anger, frustration and annoyance combined. His favorite human emotion.

What? It wasn't human? But sentient, and not a whale or dolphin? Or a Yeerk, or even Hork-Bajir or Taxxon? Nothing?

It was something new. It was really angry. Drode took a closer investigationâ€|

It was the Ellimist's fault! This was his domain, and his only!

The Ellimist had interfered! How dare he do that!

Crayak was getting ready. Getting ready for another war.

Billions, even trillions, would die. So? What did he care? He liked it! He lived off death!

The Ellimist didn't know it yet, but Crayak was growing weaker. There weren't that many deaths in the universe. Crayak had loved it when the war between the Ellimist and himself was going on, while the Howlers were still going at full blast, and especially when a giant black hole had devoured SR069, a galaxy trillions of light years from Earth. It was heavily populated, but they didn't have Z-Space, substream, or slipstream technology. All four quadrillion inhabitants were dead now.

Even when Earth had been barraged was a relief. It only killed two billion or so, but it was more than normal. The universe was too @!\$#?%\* peaceful!

Rachel started to worry. Tobias was gone. Where could he be?

Tobias had gone ahead to look for prey. Then, about 15 minutes later, they got his sonar signal. They went there, and they found- nothing! There was a whale shark not that far away, and a few small fish, butâ€|

Then Arthur found something. It looked like one of those gargoyles, but it had blades on the wings, talons for feet, and gills on its neck.

Who are you? Where's Tobias?

{How do you know Tobias? Where is he? Who are you?} Rachel asked in the telepathic form of communication she, and most of the other mutated humans, had.

I know him because he freed me. I don't know where he is- why would I have asked if I did? I'm Raptre.

Arthur was about to respond, but was interrupted. {Yeah, but what the %\$#@ are you?}demanded Rachel.



Raptre was about to say. But suddenly, the universe went crazy.

### Chapter XIII

The \_Thunder\_ had just come in from Z-Space. The \_Strafe\_ was just in front of it. Bad choice of position.

The \_Thunder\_'s four forward arms went in closer to each other, together. The energy ball was charging. It had green ripples around it.

—

\_Strafe\_ started up the main fusion engines. They had to get away from that- that whatever the @\$% it was!

Too late. \_Thunder\_'s forearms separated, leaving the ball floating. \_Thunder\_ backed up a little bit. Not much, but enough. The focusing laser on each of the arms hit the ball of pure energy. It went forward, transferring into thermonuclear energy as it wentâ€|

The \_Strafe\_'s engines were the first to go. Since the fusion reaction was already started, the energy just helped. A massive fusion reaction went off, totally destroying the \_Strafe\_.

The Andalites had just made one of the stupidest mistakes they possible could. Always assume the enemy is just as good as you.

Or better.

The debris went everywhere. \_Strafe\_ had been in geosynchronous orbit, above what the inhabitants called the Pacific Ocean. It was actually just above Oceana.

The only major pieces were the Battle Bridge and parts of the Dome. They all went down towards Oceana.

Which happened to be right where Raptre, Rachel, and her pack were.

The huge hunk of Andalite strengthened plastic hit everyone there. Rachel was knocked into someone else, Dan. He got forced straight onto Raptre's wing blade. His tail fell off.

Everyone in the pack got into an insane mode. They were in a feeding frenzy!

Raptre backed off as fast as he could. Understandably, he didn't want to eaten.

They were killing each other! Literally. Raptre counted at least two dead shark bodies.

Rylif, one of the pack members, followed him. Raptre had blood all over his right wing.

Rachel was going after Raptre too. In fact, the whole pack was.

They tore him apart, and got into an even bigger feeding frenzy.

Ryan started pacing. By his digital watch, he still had about two hours until execution. Someone had been "kind" enough to set up his watch to go by ship time, which happened to be YST or something like that. It was set up by units, but he had a rough idea of how many hours were in a unit. It was about  $1\frac{3}{4}$ .

Ryan sat down. He got out the sharp piece of metal he had managed to get off his razor.

The blade started scraping against the tiny control panel Ryan knew was there.

It took a quarter of a unit before there was any significant change. Well, other than the fact that his hands were getting bloodier by the minute. The lid had been scraped off, revealing three wires. Red, blue, and green. Ryan remembered something from some book or other: "Red, you're dead, Green, you're keen." He couldn't remember anything about blue, though.

He used the razor blade to slice up the coating on the green wire. The fiber-optic wire inside was-

Glowing?

Shoot. He hadn't thought of that.

But if it had power running, it was the right one to cut if he wanted to turn off the force field, right?

Right?

The energy surged up the blade into Ryan's hand. It blasted up his arm, but then it stopped. Ryan was too grateful to ask himself why.

The power failed all over the ship. Lights went out- emergency ones too. Force fields went down, climate control died. Massive fusion drives suddenly stopped, leaving the ship hurtling millions of miles an hour with no control.

It was chaos in the "perfect" sense.

But not so perfect for the people on board.

## Chapter XIII

Visser Three [the new one] cursed. What had happened to the host ship? There were a thousand potential hosts on it!

It had gone straight ahead, right into a moon of the system's fifth planet!

The ship had impaled itself into the #!@%\$? moon! At an angle, but stillâ€¦

If whoever was responsible still lived, they would only be so for a week or two. Kandrona starvation was very drawn out. And extremely

painful.

The Yeerk that was responsible had better be dead, for his sake.

Sean felt himself floating. Again. Darn.

But this wasn't the gentle whiteness he had been in before, or even blackness.

It was red. Blood red.

Screams, human and not, echoed like he was in a cavern. Images flashed before him- human faces distorted in extreme pain, some bloody, some with broken bones, and even some with no eyes or skin.

Next came familiar people. His parents, family, friends- All were together, smiling in front of a big house, on a huge green lawn that couldn't exist on Earth. Not anymore.

Suddenly, he saw someone who shouldn't be there. Couldn't be there. How could he be there, if he was here?

Instantly, it flashed an insanely bright red. Sean tried to shut his eyes, but he couldn't.

When the green was gone, so was everyone else. Blood was everywhere. The largest piece of anybody was someone's head.

His-

Ryan tried to pick himself up. He couldn't. Just then, he noticed there was a heavy piece of metal on top of him. How could he not have noticed it? It was pressing down onto him, well, everywhere. It lay over him like a blanket, covering his whole body, neck down.

He couldn't move his right leg, or his right arm. Funny, it wasn't pressing down that hard on his right side-

He could move all of his left fingers and toes, but none of his right. Did that mean?

—

\_Oh, God! I have a broken leg \_and\_ a broken arm!\_

--

Crayak was ready. He had already started the first stage, the mental attack on the pitiful Sean and his so-called friends.

But now he was ready for the real part. He liked this part.

Slipstream was never meant to be traveled in. It degrades the universe. Eventually, within an Earth century, everything would be destroyed, and the universe would suffer the fate of total and irreversible collapse- the exact opposite of the Big Bang.

But Crayak had other things in mind. He was in a particularly evil mood, and felt like speeding up the process.

However, he didn't like destroying the whole universe. No, that was far too simple and crude. Besides, whom would he spread his evil onto?

The plan was to induce that effect onto two star systems- Sol and Stratayeema [Earth's solar system (really) and the Andalite solar system (I made that up), respectively]. But, the exact opposite would go on the stars- spreading their raging fires of nuclear fusion onto the whole system. Even though that would get rid of most of Crayak's favorite race, the Yeerks, he didn't care. Replacement Yeerks would evolve soon enough. With his guidance.

Sean jerked suddenly. The red background was gone, the gentle off-white back again. Good.

I HAVE AN OFFER.

"What?"

CRAYAK WILL DESTROY YOUR SOLAR SYSTEM.

"Great. Just great. What's the offer?"

I MADE A DEAL WITH HIM.

"So?"

WILL YOU LISTEN?! ANYWAY, HE WILL TRADE A LIFE FOR THE RETURN OF THINGS TO THE WAY THEY WERE BEFORE.

Sean thought for a second.

"I'll do it."

YOU NEED TO DO ONE MORE THING, FIRST.

"What's that?"

BECOME AN ANIMORPH. {Note- That's because Crayak will only accept an Animorph's life}

Chapter XIV Part 6

SEAN

"What?! What the heck is that?"

YOU'LL KNOW SOON ENOUGH.

Flash! Back to the Yeerk Pool. Shoot.

I was in my "normal" body again. In that same high-security cell.

Everyone was moving. Screams, sobs, the normal sounds of the Yeerk Pool.

What was that? A huge roar! Grizzly bear, thundering down the steps, followed by a hawk screeching overhead and another thing- looked just like me- following the hawk.

Talons flashed, wing blades cut, and massive paws swiped. The Horks were falling, one by one. Taxxons attacked and were neatly turned into shish kebob.

The grizzly managed its way to my cage. Fumbling with a key stolen from a dead guard, the bear managed to open my cage.

Instantly I was out, slashing, sky diving, and altogether kicking some Yeerk butt.

Okay, we got what we wanted. Now get \_out\_! You too, Sean.

I followed the tiny fighting zoo out up a long set of twisting stairs. We emerged in a devastated town.

Okay, Sean, we know who and what you are. Now, we need to get you to that box, right now!

Wait a second. How do you know?

Ellimist. Now let's \_go\_!

Crayak had given the until 25:45, GST. It was now 25:43.

The Ellimist hadn't given him that Animorph's life yet. He had already destroyed Stratayeema. Just a little bit longer, until he could destroy Sol, tooâ€¦

Why wasn't Sean an Animorph yet? Stratayeema was gone, Sol in a matter of minutes! Come on!

Rachel was still putting the box together. \_Come \_on\_, Rachel, if you don't do it then you'll all be dead in a few seconds!\_

--

Understandably, Sean was fidgeting. Just a few seconds, and they'd all be deadâ€¦

SEAN

Yes! Rachel finally finishedâ€¦

Marco stuck his hand on the box. I reached out. I knew that in a few seconds, we'd all be deadâ€¦

I felt a tingling, then nothing.

Epilogue

The Ellimist was desperate. Twenty secondsâ€¦

Yes!

He reached back in time, thirty yearsâ€¦

Two people. They'd meet at a fair. He immediately started a huge thunderstorm.

Good. The fair was cancelled. Neither would travel the thirty miles to the fair, and neither would ever meet. Sean would never be born.

Crayak was furious. That was so- soâ€|

But he couldn't do anything. Not without destroying himself.

He settled down, and reversed what he had done.

@#\$\$ the Ellimist!

This has been a \_dair nisram\_, the recording the Ellimist makes whenever he erases someone's life. Some parts are narrated, some not.

The Ellimist shut the \_dair nisram\_ away for safekeeping. Maybe he'd use it some day, maybe not.

He had a feeling he mightâ€|

End  
file.